

HON. MR. SCOTT—The mover of these resolutions is not new to public life, having had a seat in the other branch of Parliament for many years, and it was therefore to be expected of him that in addressing the House he would do so in the excellent style which he exhibited and the very moderate language which he used in supporting the address. My friend and colleague from the city of Ottawa, who seconded the resolutions, apologized for his inexperience. I think it was not necessary, because the speech itself—though I do not concur in the views he expressed—was delivered in very clear and forcible language. While my hon. friend has not been long in the Senate, he has had large experience of public affairs. Knowing the qualities he possesses, I was surprised to find that he supported every part of the policy that the Government have introduced before the country. I suppose it is incidental to public life in Canada that individual opinion is largely ignored by those supporting an administration. I am glad to think that in other countries where representative institutions prevail men do not give such unswerving support to party leaders. It seems to be the idea in Canada that a man must endorse without question every act of his party. I have noticed, as I have no doubt other hon. gentlemen have, that whether supporting the administration of Lord Salisbury or of Mr. Gladstone, a very considerable number of members in both Houses in England have thought proper on various occasions to express opinions differing from those of their leaders, and society acquiesced in the propriety of their independent conduct on such occasions. I should be glad if our public men in this country would follow in their footsteps. I think a very much better condition of things would prevail if hon. gentlemen were free to differ occasionally from the Government that they are supporting on the various questions which are from time to time presented for their consideration. Coming now to the Speech, the first paragraph of the address asks us to join in congratulating the country on the “sufficient harvest of last year, and on the prosperity and substantial progress of the country.” Now, that is a very doubtful compliment to this country, that we are

able to produce sufficient for our own consumption. It has been the pride of the people of Canada that ours is one of the food-producing countries of the world—that we grew not merely sufficient for our own consumption, but that one of the great sources of our wealth was the export of food supplies to countries that were more thickly populated and not so fortunately placed as Canada. The term “sufficient harvest” seems to me to question whether the last harvest was up to the general average. The ordinary term that we find employed in the speech from the throne is “bountiful harvest,” but it seems the opinion of His Excellency’s advisers that the harvest of last year was not bountiful. It is to be regretted, no doubt, that the exports of this country have fallen off in the last year or two. One of our chief sources of export has been the products of the farm, and if I remember distinctly the speeches made in this Chamber a few years ago we were told that under the policy with which Canada is now supposed to be blessed we would have a home market and our farmers would have high prices for their products irrespective of the market outside. The experience of the last two or three years must have removed from all minds the delusion that by an act of parliament we can affect the immutable laws of supply and demand—that by any policy which we may adopt in this country we can give a fictitious value to the products of Canada. Hon. gentlemen ridiculed very much the expression of Sir Richard Cartwright that we were as powerless to affect the laws of supply and demand as a fly on a wheel is to control the movements of the wheel; but have we not here convincing evidence that Sir Richard Cartwright was perfectly right in the figure which he used in describing the measure which was then introduced? It was misleading the people to represent to them that by legislation or any other means an artificial price could be given for the products of the farm. At the present time Canada is enjoying a fair degree of prosperity, but it is not due in any sense to the policy of the Government. The chief product at the present moment which is giving us prosperity is lumber. The exports of the farm and of the fisheries have somewhat diminished